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OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHML #0717 0791002  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 191002Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0207  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 000717

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STATE FOR DRL, DS/ATA, EAP/MTS, EAP/RSP, INL/AEE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES POLICE ON EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS AND  
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

REF: A. MANILA 666 (ANTI-ARROYO FERVOR FIZZLES)

[1](#)B. MANILA 521 (PROTESTS LACK CRITICAL MASS)

[1](#)C. MANILA 539 (2008 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT)

[1](#)D. 07 MANILA 3881 (EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS DECLINE IN 2007)

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: In a March 15 speech to nearly 1,600 police officers, including both the nation's most senior officers and its newest recruits, the Ambassador underscored the critical role of the police in protecting democratic institutions and values, as well as the need for the police to intensify efforts to combat extrajudicial killings and trafficking in persons. The Ambassador used her remarks at the annual Philippine National Police Academy Alumni Homecoming Ceremony to stress the USG's commitment to assisting the police to improve its ability to protect human rights and ensure that those involved in extrajudicial killings and other abuses are successfully prosecuted and brought to justice. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. On March 15, the Ambassador joined Philippine National Police Academy Director Danilo Abarzosa and Philippine Public Safety College Director Margarita Cojuanco at the Philippine National Police Academy's annual Alumni Homecoming Ceremony in Silang, Cavite. In her keynote speech, the Ambassador commended the police for their recent work with civil society groups to create the conditions under which citizens can exercise their democratic right to peaceful protest, citing the police agency's handling of large political demonstrations on February 25, 29, and March 14 without incident (refs A and B). She stressed that the police force is the shield that protects and provides security for the population and that democracy, rule of law, and economic growth can only flourish in a secure environment. Police efforts during the recent demonstrations displayed the police agency's commitment to public order, as well as the growing professionalism throughout its ranks.

INTENSIFIED EFFORTS VITAL  
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[1](#)3. The Ambassador also used the opportunity to commend the police for improved efforts to investigate alleged extrajudicial killings and trafficking in persons cases. She commended the Philippines for the reported dramatic decline in alleged killings in 2007, but she emphasized that much more needs to be done. As these issues continue to receive significant domestic and international attention, she urged the police to intensify their investigative efforts to achieve more prosecutions and convictions in these cases.

The Ambassador emphasized the critical role of the police in building stronger cases to ensure that the "the public respects the integrity of security forces." A transcript of the Ambassador's remarks as delivered is available on the Embassy's public website at <http://manila.usembassy.gov>.

[1](#)4. The Philippine National Police Academy opened its doors in 1978, graduating its first class of cadets in 1980. The Academy, overseen by the Philippine Public Safety College, currently boasts almost 1,400 cadets in its four-year Bachelor of Science in Public Safety

program. Since 1978, more than 53,000 Academy graduates have entered the officer ranks of the Philippine National Police, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. The Academy's program is now one of the hallmark reform efforts of the national police agency's transformation program, with senior police leadership recognizing that professional development and training are essential building blocks for a more capable police force.

COMMENT

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15. Embassy officials from the Ambassador on down continue publicly and privately to highlight U.S. concern about unlawful killings and trafficking in persons and to seek additional ways the USG could provide assistance to the Philippine Government, including the Philippine National Police, in combating these human rights abuses. The Ambassador used the March 15 event at the police academy to underscore to nearly 1,600 police officers from every rank the USG's commitment to assisting the police to protect and promote human rights and, more specifically, to ensure that those involved in extrajudicial killings -- whoever they may be -- face justice. We will continue to use every available opportunity to highlight USG concerns and to press for intensified government efforts at all levels to address these abuses.

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